



General Assembly

Distr.: General
2 June 2005

Original: English

Fifty-ninth session

Agenda items 45 and 55

**Integrated and coordinated implementation of
and follow-up to the outcomes of the major
United Nations conferences and summits in the
economic, social and related fields**

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Letter dated 1 June 2005 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit the letter of Seyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, addressed to you (see annex), and its enclosures, the second of which is the Tehran communiqué, adopted by the International Conference on Environment, Peace and the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures, held in Tehran on 9 and 10 May 2005.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 45 and 55.

(Signed) Mehdi **Danesh-Yazdi**
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.



**Annex to the letter dated 1 June 2005 from the Chargé
d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic
of Iran to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour of writing to express my deep gratitude and appreciation for your kind and thoughtful message to the Tehran International Conference on Environment, Peace and the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures, a joint initiative of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Nations Environment Programme and also supported by the United Nations University and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). We in Iran are indeed very pleased with the process, participation, substantive discussion and, finally, the outcome — the Tehran communiqué.

The Tehran Conference, a highly analytical gathering of a good number of prominent and well-known academics and experts in the field, and a number of high-level Government officials, succeeded in taking a step further towards exploring the nexus between environment and peace and security. It also addressed the issue of post-conflict reconstruction in cases of environmental damage and stressed the imperative of developing new, binding international legal instruments to ensure environmental integrity during armed conflict.

The Conference also looked into the contribution dialogue proper — hence, dialogue among civilizations and cultures — can and should make towards the promotion of peace and security, as the essential and irreplaceable prerequisite for the effective and meaningful preservation, protection and long-term management of the environment. It took as its premise the fundamental concept that genuine dialogue on a global scale, involving all stakeholders and across the board, provides the only way forward towards ensuring meaningful and effective international cooperation, in all fields, including in the field of environment.

I am sure you will note that the participants in the Conference paid due heed to what we all share and cherish with regard to genuine multilateralism and democratic global governance. I fully concur with their assertion that “A vibrant, inclusive and democratic multilateralism, directly linked with and reinforced by democracy at the national level, provides the best hope for a future for the international community based on respect, tolerance, accountable governance, human rights and inclusiveness”. Equally important, in this regard, is their due emphasis on the imperative of effective consideration of the democratic principle in the pursuit of the process of reform of the United Nations — a principle, I rest assured, you are personally committed to.

The Tehran Conference concluded with a number of practical conclusions and recommendations, including for the United Nations and its extended family, which I believe deserve commensurate attention at various levels. It also lent support to one of the proposals which happens to be closest to my heart — the proposal I made back in April at UNESCO for the establishment of a global forum for the promotion of dialogue among civilizations and cultures. This is one particular area of work I will be personally pursuing once out of office, a few months down the line.

Acting on the explicit recommendation of the participants in the Tehran Conference, I have the pleasure of forwarding the text of the Tehran communiqué, for your information and as an input to the millennium review summit in September 2005 in New York.

(Signed) Seyed Mohammad **Khatami**
President of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Enclosure I

International Conference on Environment, Peace and the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures

Tehran, 9 and 10 May 2005

The International Conference on Environment, Peace and the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures, organized jointly by the Department of Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and co-sponsored by the United Nations University and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), was held in Tehran on 9 and 10 May 2005. It was opened by Seyed Mohammad Khatami, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on Monday, 9 May 2005. Klaus Toepfer, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UNEP, delivered the message of Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General, to the Conference, and made a keynote statement.

Following the opening plenary, nine working sessions were held, in the course of which representatives of academia, expertise and civil society met to discuss responses to the challenges facing the international community at a time of global uncertainty and increasing trends of conflict and environmental degradation that combine in a vicious circle to undermine the continued viability of an inclusive and peaceful global society and civilization living in harmony with nature. High-level Government representatives attending the meeting participated in a special ministerial round table devoted to the exchange of views on the *problématique* of the Tehran Conference. The discussion at the Conference took as its fundamental premise the oneness of creation, a common humanity, a common destiny and a common global environment.

The Conference met under the Chairmanship of Massoumeh Ebtekar, Vice-President and Head of the Department of Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and undertook an extensive and rich discussion on a variety of themes related to environment, peace and dialogue.

Kamal Kharrazi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, made a statement at the closing session of the Conference on 10 May 2005.

Enclosure II

Tehran communiqué

Participants in the Conference underscored their central conviction of the common brotherhood of all peoples and a vision of a global civilization enriched by the peaceful interaction among individuals, cultures, religions, perspectives and States. In this respect, the increasingly fragmented nature of global discourse characterized by underdevelopment, poverty, insecurity and alienation in large parts of the world and increasing concentration of wealth linked to excessive consumption and trends of global environmental degradation have contributed to increasing global tensions and insecurity. The continued centrality of principle 25 of the Rio Declaration, which states "Peace, development and environmental protection are interdependent and indivisible", was recognized.

The concept of a new model of dialogue among civilizations and cultures based on mutual respect and recognition must be put in place. The environment presents an important aspect of a holistic dialogue. Such a concept can contribute to enhancing understanding by developing win-win solutions to problems, supporting a revitalized framework for effective multilateralism, developing effective confidence-building approaches, developing strategies for conflict avoidance and effective decision-making based on collective approaches with effective implementation and recognition of ethical and spiritual values.

The need for a new model of dialogue is particularly relevant in the context of new and devastating environmental threats at the planetary level. These include climate change, ozone depletion, chemical issues and loss of biodiversity. Effective dialogue would lead to more effective international strategies to address these problems in an integrated way and mobilize political will.

Accelerating trends of environmental degradation and poverty at the local, national and global levels lead to increased competition for scarce resources such as land and water, and can be potential flashpoints for violent conflict. Rapid environmental change associated with insecurity and losses of livelihoods undermine the resilience of societies and increase their vulnerability. An inclusive approach based on dialogue can be a catalyst for cooperation to ensure that problems of shared resources can produce effective shared solutions. Such dialogue contains seeds of reconciliation, mutual understanding, peace and sustainable development.

As demonstrated by many recent conflicts, the environment and human health are increasingly victims of violent conflict that does not respect established international conventions and norms of behaviour. Binding international agreements with clear compliance, enforcement and compensation mechanisms must be established to protect natural resources, including freshwater, the environment and the health of civilian populations in times of armed conflict, given the immense destructive potential of modern weapons. Such an initiative should be linked to increased efforts for disarmament and demilitarization at the regional and global levels.

Effective environmental assessment of the effects of conflict must be utilized more consistently. Post-conflict strategies for environmental recovery should benefit from clear implementation strategies that take into account social, economic and

political factors. These assessments and new environmental structures can also build confidence among parties formerly in conflict.

There is an urgent need to recall, re-evaluate and reconstitute the vital ethical and spiritual messages that are common to all faiths concerning the protection of the environment as God's creation and the central message of peace, tolerance and harmony. Such a process should develop the notion of global ethics and the spiritual traditions that are essential to environmental stewardship.

A vibrant inclusive and democratic multilateralism, directly linked with and reinforced by democracy at the national level, provides the best hope for a future for the international community based on respect, tolerance, accountable governance, human rights and inclusiveness. The trend of fragmentation along sectoral lines that characterizes current institutional frameworks must be addressed as a cross-cutting issue of relevance to all sectors, as well as financial decision-making.

The process of reflection and dialogue should eventually yield more perspectives and develop stronger decision-making frameworks in international institutions that can integrate all aspects of environment, peace, security and development.

The reform process taking place within the United Nations should remain faithful to the spirit of the Charter and genuine multilateralism and provide hope to the international community for a future of effective multilateralism based on mutual understanding, mutual respect and the principle of dialogue. This process should reinforce its principal objectives of promoting peace, security, freedom, democracy, respect for human dignity and respect for creation. To be meaningful, the reform process must be democratic and accommodate all views and respect the rights of all peoples and nations — big and small.

Intersectoral coordination within the United Nations must be made more effective, and a dialogue within the United Nations framework is required to this end. Such a dialogue should lead to the development of common goals and meaningful governance processes supported by countries honouring commitments made.

Conclusions and recommendations

- Human beings as a collective entity are only beginning to become aware of the Earth as our common home, but we have not yet begun to realize that we also have a common destiny
- Humanity is in need of a new shared vision of a common destiny to create a culture of universal peace and solidarity that can create an environment free from poverty, war, fear, violence and insecurity. The recognition of the environment as our common heritage, underpinned by a dialogue among civilizations and cultures, can pave the way
- It is essential to continue to deepen and broaden the process of dialogue among civilizations and cultures, for which practical mechanisms and arrangements need to be developed and devised. This includes proposals such as that made by President Khatami at the recent UNESCO meeting for the establishment of a global forum for the promotion of dialogue among civilizations and cultures

- UNEP should continue to deepen the initiative on environment, peace and dialogue and consider holding international meetings, possibly on an annual basis, as a practical follow-up to the Tehran Conference — and in different regions of the world to advance this dialogue
- Efforts should be made to develop better understanding on the issues of security and environment and to link such an understanding to broader discussions on security. Assessments that incorporate broader issues bringing together environment, development and security factors should be developed
- Greater efforts must be made to include broader constituencies, including civil society, academics, researchers and scientists, and mayors and parliamentarians in this process. In this regard, a more effective programme of education for sustainable development at all levels is essential
- The proposed peacebuilding commission that is addressed in the reform process of the United Nations can potentially contribute to meeting the objectives of this Conference. Such a commission should include in its terms of reference, from inception, peacebuilding in the nexus of environment, poverty, development and security
- Consideration should be given to the development of forums for:
 - Preventive dialogue and confidence-building
 - Conflict resolution
 - Post-conflict restitution
- Cultural, ethical and spiritual values must once again be fully integrated into strategies of dialogue for peace, security and development

We live today in a world fragmented by misunderstandings, suspicion and distrust among peoples, nations and States. We have the responsibility and duty to develop a dialogue that can once again bring hope and optimism based on mutual understanding and respect. This is the commitment of us all gathered here in Tehran on 10 May 2005. We resolve that the Tehran communiqué shall be formally submitted by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations Secretary-General as a message to the millennium review summit, to be held in September 2005 in New York.
